

# Meeting Minutes

OCTOBER 15, 2012 6:30P.M.

HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 145

Commission Name	Governor's Commission on South Asian American Affairs
Name of Commission Chair	Jesse Singh
Commission Administrator/ Staff Present	Yi Shen, Elizabeth Hines, Agnes M. Smith
Guest Speakers	Izzy Patoka, Executive Director, GOCI Michael Lord, Executive Director of Maryland State Ethics Commissions
List of Attendees	Chair Jesse Singh, Vice Chair Amjad Riar, Anis Ahmed, Arthur Bezwada, Ishani Chowdhury, Rani David, Sharad Doshi, Dr. Kamala Edwards, Mohan Grover, Dr. Suresh Gupta, Irma Hafeez, Tahira Hussain, Sheila Khatri, Dr. Nimal Pahadi, Shailesh Patel, Asoka Ranaweera, Devang Shah, Rana Shaikh, Baljinder Singh
Absent	Dr. Seema Lyer, Kia Scherr

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jesse Singh. This is the first meeting for the newly formed Governor's Commission on South Asian American Affairs. The Chair thanked the community for their support and for being there. He thanked Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Anthony Brown for their leadership and vision along with Delegate Sam Arora, Delegate Aruna Miller and Delegate Kumar Barve who have supported the Commission in this endeavor. Chair Singh also thanked Executive Director Izzy Patoka and his staff. Commissioners introduced themselves to the community.

## Topics

Summary Of Discussion			
Conclusions			
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline	

## REMARKS

SECRETARY EDWARD CHOW  
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

Summary Of Discussion	Secretary Edward Chow noted he was delighted to be here and brought welcomes from Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Anthony Brown and congratulations. Secretary Chow noted that the Asian American Business Conference had help from this community and this was the most successful Business Conference in the Asian and South Asian American community. He noted that when he came on board three years ago, his department was last in Minority Business Enterprise. After three years he is delighted to say that his department is now per capita number three based on the information he received
-----------------------	---

	<p>from the Minority Business Enterprise. In addition to that he looked at his five commissions, 73 commissioners in which when he first reviewed them there were no Hispanics, no Native Americans, no Asian Americans, very few women and not enough blacks. After three years they now have 24% African American, 20% Women Veterans, 4 Hispanics, 2 Native Americans, 1 Asian American and 1 person from South Asia. He also noted that the Governor placed him on the State Police Diversity Committee in 2011. In February 2012 they had the most diverse class ever to enter the Police Academy. (68 White Males, 8 Women, 13 Blacks, 4 Hispanics, 3 Asian Americans) He noted that there were two individuals that listed as others names Muhammad and Kingy. There is outreach to communities that they are not aware of. Secretary Chow noted that the July 2012 class is the most diverse class going to the Maryland State Police Academy with 42% being non-white males. This is an on-going work in progress and he is delighted to have teammates like Executive Director Izzy Patoka, Director Elizabeth Hines, Administrative Director Yi Shen, etc.</p>		
Conclusions			
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline	

REMARKS		DELEGATE SAM ARORA	
Summary Of Discussion	Delegate Sam Arora brought greetings from himself and the two other South Asian delegates, Majority Leader Kumar Barve and Delegate Aruna Miller. He noted how proud he is that they are here as Commissioners and how proud he is of our Governor who had the foresight to establish this Commission. He noted that the Governor and 100 members went to India last year to strengthen trade relations. He hopes that is a bond that continues to grow not only for mutual interest but because of the connections many people in this room has. He noted that it has been his experience/observation that being exceptional is not like an honorary degree. As he looks around the room many people he knows are exceptional and they will continue to help to make this a more and more exceptional State. He is excited to see what this body does.		
Conclusions			
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline	

WELCOME GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF  
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES &  
OVERVIEW OF COMMISSIONERS  
ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
IZZY PATOKA

Summary Of Discussion	<p>Executive Director Izzy Patoka thanked Delegate Arora and Secretary Chow the hardest working Secretary in the Governor's Cabinet. He brought greetings from Governor's Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. He informed Commission that Director Elizabeth Hines</p>
-----------------------	--

	<p>had an accident and will not be attending. He congratulated the Commissioners for accepting the Governor's nomination to be on this Commission. Executive Director Patoka gave an overview of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI). He started with the staff which Administrative Director Yi Shen is the staff in charge of the South Asian American Commission and also the staff in charge of the Asian Pacific American. Project Coordinator Agnes Smith is the staff for the seven Commissions. In State government there are twenty cabinet level agencies. In addition to these cabinet level agencies Maryland has eight coordinating offices which include: Governor's Office of Homeland Security, Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, Governor's Office for Children, Governor's Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Governor's Grants Office, Governor's Office of Community Initiatives and the Governor's Office of Crime, Control and Prevention. More recently the Governor established through Executive Order the Governor's Office on Health Care Reform. These eight coordinating offices have two areas of function: 1. Weave between the massive bureaucracy of State government when necessary and 2. To help coordinate when multiple agencies are working on the same initiative. He gave an overview of how the Ethnic Commissions in existence before 2007 became a part of the Governor's Office under the GOCI. Also if any new commissions are established they will be under the GOCI. The Governor has since created four more Commissions including: Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs, Governor's Commission on African Affairs, Governor's Commission on Caribbean Affairs and the new Governor's Commission on South Asian American Affairs. The Executive Order was signed on August 29, 2012 for the Governor's Commission on South Asian American Affairs. He noted that one of the charges for the Commission is to advise the Governor on what is most important to the South Asian community in Maryland. This is the real core and focus. There was a review of the Commissioners Handbook which notes the make-up of the Commission, responsibilities and duties, length of term allowed, what the Governor wants Commission to do, etc. The Commission was advised on how to deal with the press. They were also informed that GOCI has a Communications Director, Tony White.</p>		
Conclusions			
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline

COMMISSIONER ETHICS

MICHAEL LORD, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF MARYLAND  
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

Summary Of Discussion	<p>Mr. Michael Lord informed the Commission the Public Ethics Law is to provide guidance to ensure that state officials, public officials act within partiality, make decisions within partiality, avoid conflicts of interest, etc. The Public Ethics Law deals with three primary concerns: conflict of interest, financial disclosure and lobbying. In regards of conflict of interest the commissioners should have been given a form at time of appointment where they can disclose any conflict of interest before being appointed. This allows them to be free to serve since the conflict of interest was revealed before appointment. He noted that the disclosure form does not cover them for any new conflicts of interest. The ethnic's law deals with individuals. He noted that if the commissioners have any questions to</p>
-----------------------	---

	please call before doing anything questionable.		
Conclusions			
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline	

COMMISSION SUPPORT STAFF

AGNES M. SMITH  
PROJECT COORDINATOR

Summary Of Discussion	Project Coordinator Agnes M. Smith informed the Commission that they can be reimbursed for their travel expenses to their meetings, meetings on behalf of Commission and events on behalf of Commission. Commissioners will receive a form by e-mail and it must be submitted within 60 days from date of occasion. This form will be updated whenever necessary. Also, Commissioners will receive business cards.		
Conclusions			
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline	

Commission Retreat was set for Saturday, December 1, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

It was noted that on December 11, 2013 there will be a Joint Commission Assembly. This includes all the Ethnic Commissions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45p.m.